

**AMENDMENT**

**In the Claims**

Please amend the claims as shown below.

1. (Currently Amended) A payout tube for a storage container, the payout tube comprising:

an elongated conduit ~~with a flexible portion placed~~ disposed in an interior of the storage container; and

a hollow member adjoining the elongated conduit and extending through a hole in a wall of the storage container to an exterior area of the container,

wherein the elongated conduit comprises a pattern of holes longitudinally disposed along the elongated conduit, each hole passing through a sidewall of the elongated conduit,

wherein the pattern of holes is operative to provide the elongated conduit with flexibility,  
and

wherein the hollow member is rigid

~~said flexible portion including a plurality of independent and discrete slots.~~

2. (Canceled)

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) The payout tube of claim 1, wherein the ~~flexible portion~~ elongated conduit can bend or flex in an angle ranging from about 1 degree to about 120 degrees, wherein the elongated conduit and the hollow member are sections of a unitary molded structure, and wherein the hollow member comprises a plurality of tabs for retaining the hollow member in the hole via engaging the wall.

5. (Currently Amended) The payout tube of claim 1 ~~[[4]]~~, wherein the elongated conduit flexible portion can bend or flex in an angle ranging from about 5 to about 90 degrees, and wherein a cross section of the elongated conduit, taken between two of the holes, comprises an unbroken ring of the sidewall.

6. (Currently Amended) The payout tube of claim 1, wherein the storage container ~~includes~~ contains ~~a continuous length of material comprising~~ communication wire and cable extending through the hollow member and the elongated conduit s, ~~building wires and cables,~~ electrical wires, steel strands, tire cords and cables, ropes, and tubing.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) The payout tube of claim [7] 1, wherein the number and size of the holes ~~slots~~ are relative to a ~~the~~ desired flexibility and ~~required~~ strength of the payout tube and wherein the elongated conduit and the hollow member have a common composition of plastic material.

9. (Currently Amended) The payout tube of claim [7] 1, wherein at least one of the holes is ~~the shape of the slots are substantially circular, rectangular, square, triangular, polygonal, or a combination thereof.~~

10. (Currently Amended) The payout tube of claim [7] 1, wherein the pattern of holes comprises at least four holes respectively disposed at four discrete longitudinal locations ~~slots are located along the elongated conduit entire length of the flexible portion or only a part thereof.~~

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A device for supporting removing a continuous length of material communications cable during removal from a storage container, the device comprising:

a tubular member comprising:

a rigid section extending through a port in a wall of the storage container; and

a flexible tube, attached to the rigid section and disposed in an interior of the storage container; and

a retainer, at the rigid section, for attaching the tubular member to the wall,

wherein the flexible tube comprises:

a sidewall circumferentially disposed around a channel; and

a plurality of holes through the sidewall, each disposed at a respective longitudinal location along the flexible tube

~~an elongated conduit with a flexible portion placed in an interior of the container and a remaining portion is exterior to the container, said flexible portion including a plurality of independent and discrete slots.~~

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 13, wherein the flexible tube further comprises a second plurality of holes through the sidewall, each disposed at a respective circumferential location around the sidewall ~~the flexible portion can bend or flex in an angle ranging from about 1 degree to about 120 degrees.~~

17. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 13 ~~[[6]]~~, wherein each hole in the plurality of holes is circumscribed by the sidewall

~~the flexible portion can bend or flex in an angle ranging from about 5 to about 90 degrees.~~

18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) The device of claim ~~[[18]]~~ 13, wherein each hole in the plurality of holes is oblong, and wherein the plurality of holes are operative to provide flexibility ~~the slots are located along the entire length of the flexible portion or only a part thereof.~~

20. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 13, wherein the plurality of holes comprise a pattern of holes disposed at discrete longitudinal and circumferential locations of the flexible tube and wherein the plurality of holes are operative to provide the flexible tube with flexibility ~~wherein the flexible portion comprises a plurality of independent and discrete corrugations.~~

21. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 13 20, wherein the rigid section comprises a flange embracing an interior surface of the wall and a tab embracing an exterior surface of the wall ~~corrugations are located along the entire length of the flexible portion or only a part thereof.~~

[This section has been intentionally left blank.]

22. (Currently Amended) A storage container for a continuous length of material, the storage container comprising

a payout tube having an elongated conduit with a flexible portion ~~placed~~ disposed in an interior of the storage container and ~~a remaining another portion is~~ exterior to the storage container, said flexible portion ~~including comprising~~ a plurality of independent and discrete first slot[[s]] located at a first longitudinal position along the flexible portion of the elongated conduit and a second slot located at a second longitudinal position along the flexible portion of the elongated conduit.

[This section has been intentionally left blank.]

23. (Currently Amended) A system, for ~~removing~~ supporting a continuous length of material during removal from a storage container, ~~the system comprising a device comprising~~ an elongated conduit ~~with~~ that comprises:

a flexible tube ~~portion through which the continuous length material is removed wherein said flexible portion is placed~~ disposed in an interior of the container; and

a ~~remaining~~ rigid member ~~portion is placed~~ disposed exterior to the container, said flexible tube comprising:

a first groove fully circumscribing the flexible tube to close upon itself at a first lengthwise location along the flexible tube; and

a second groove fully circumscribing the flexible tube to close upon itself at a second lengthwise location along the flexible tube,

wherein the first and second grooves are operative to increase flexibility of the flexible tube

~~portion including a plurality of independent and discrete slots.~~

[This section has been intentionally left blank.]

24. (Currently Amended) A method for removing a continuous length of material from a storage container, the method comprising:

providing a hole in a wall of the storage container;

providing a payout device comprising:

a flexible tube, comprising a first slot disposed at a first longitudinal location of the flexible tube and a second slot disposed at a second longitudinal location of the flexible tube;

a rigid tube adjoining the flexible tube;

a flange attached to the rigid tube; and

a plurality of tabs disposed at a peripheral area of the rigid tube,

inserting the payout device through the hole in the wall, wherein the flange faces an inner surface of the wall and the plurality of tabs contact an outer surface of the wall;

~~having an elongated conduit with a flexible portion placed in an interior of the container and a remaining portion being exterior to the container, the flexible portion including a plurality of independent and discrete slots; and~~

removing a portion of the continuous length of material from the storage container through the rigid payout tube and the flexible tube.

25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 24 [[5]], further comprising bending the flexible tube wherein the flexible portion of the payout tubes bends towards the a direction at which the continuous length material enters the payout device tube.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 24, further comprising wherein the flexible portion bending[[s]] or flexing[[es]] the flexible tube in an angle ranging from about 1 degree to about 120 degrees.

28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 24[[7]], further comprising ~~wherein~~ ~~the flexible portion~~ bending[[s]] or flexing[[es]] the flexible tube in an angle ranging from about 5 to about 90 degrees.

29. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein the continuous length of material does not substantially kink or tangle while being removed from the storage container.

[This section has been intentionally left blank.]



30. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a continuous length of material, the method comprising:

packaging a continuous length of material in a storage container, the container comprising a payout tube having an elongated conduit with a flexible portion placed in an interior of the container and a remaining portion disposed ~~is~~ exterior to the container, the flexible portion including a plurality of independent and discrete slots, located at respective discrete locations along the flexible portion; and

removing the continuous length of material from the storage container through the payout tube.

31. (Original) The method of claim 30, wherein the flexible portion of the payout tubes bends towards the direction at which the continuous length of material enters the payout tube.

32. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein the flexible portion can bend or flex in an angle ranging from about 1 to about 120 degrees.

33. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 31 [[2]], wherein the flexible portion can bend or flex in an angle ranging from about 5 to about 90 degrees.

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